

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

THE SEMANTICS OF OPENING VERBS IN DAGBANI



MASTER OF ARTS

2021

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

THE SEMANTICS OF OPENING VERBS IN DAGBANI



**A Thesis in the Department of Gur-Gonja Education, Faculty of Ghanaian
Languages Education, Submitted to the School of**

**Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of**

Master of Arts

**(Ghanaian Language Studies)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

MAY, 2024

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, SEIDU ZUBERU, hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis/dissertation/project as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME: PROF. SAMUEL ALHASSAN ISSAH

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family.



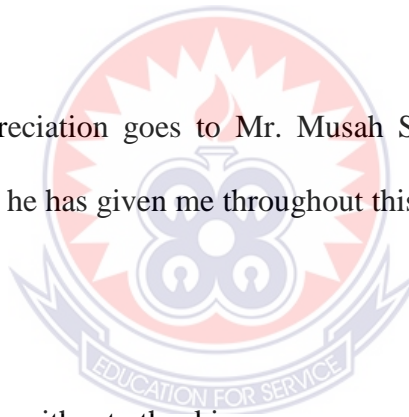
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank the almighty God, Allah, for giving me good health and the strength to be able to complete this work.

I also express my profound gratitude my mentor and supervisor for this thesis, Professor Samuel Alhassan Issah, for the patience he exercised from the beginning of this work to the end. His inspirational talks and motivational words during my study from my undergraduate level to this end; I say: may the love of God be upon you till you leave this earth. Your zeal to always bring the best out of people shall never go unrewarded.

Further, my warm appreciation goes to Mr. Musah Sugri Issahaku for the imminent contribution and support he has given me throughout this work. May God guide and bless him.

Finally, I cannot end without thanking every member of the family for their encouragement and support during my course of study. May Allah bless you all.



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CONJ	conjunction particle
DEF	definite article
DM	deictic particle
FOC	focus particle
IMP	imperative marker
INF	infinitive marker
IPFV	imperfective marker
PFV	perfective marker
REF	referent particle
COND	conditional particle
DEM	demonstrative
NOM	nominalizer

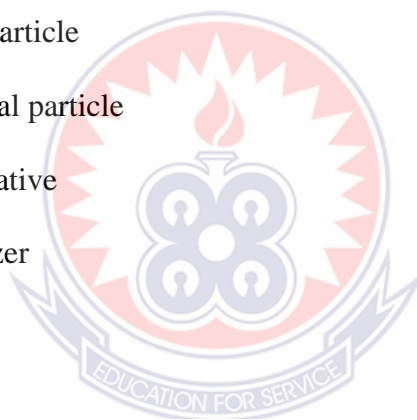
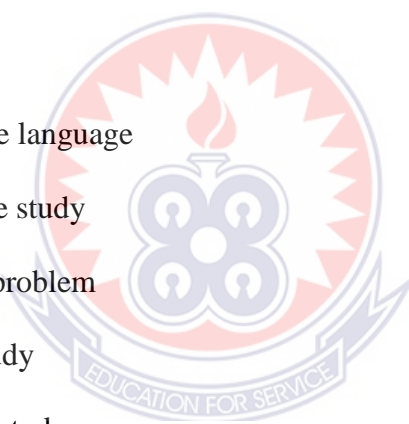


TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
ABSTRACT	xi

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of the language	2
1.2	Background to the study	2
1.3	Statement of the problem	3
1.4	Purpose of the study	4
1.5	Objectives of the study	4
1.6	Research questions	4
1.7	Significance of the study	5
1.8	Delimitation of the study	5
1.9	Organization of the study	6



CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0	Introduction	7
2.1	Separation verbs	7
2.2	Opening verbs	11
2.2.1	<i>yo'e</i> 'open, generic'	13
2.2.2	<i>ya'e</i> 'open, of mouth or entrance'	14
2.2.3	<i>ga'e</i> 'open, of buttons, belts, etc.'	14
2.2.4	<i>lake</i> 'open or overturn, of flat object'	15
2.2.5	<i>vuke</i> 'open or remove, of hat, lid or top, box or a container'	15
2.2.6	<i>suke</i> 'remove, of container with convex base'	16
2.2.7	<i>vake</i> 'remove, of thatch or roofs'	16
2.2.8	<i>foe</i> 'remove, from loose or sloppy attachment'	17
2.2.9	<i>fuke</i> 'remove, of firm attachment'	17
2.2.10	<i>vue</i> 'remove, usually of plants or large objects with force from the ground'	18
2.2.11	The semantics of the verb <i>yooi</i> 'OPEN in Dagbani'	19
2.3	Conclusion	21

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0	Introduction	22
3.1	Research approach	22
3.2	Research design	23

3.3	Sampling technique and sample size	23
3.4	Sources of data	24
3.4.1	Primary source of data	25
3.4.2	Secondary source of data collection	25
3.4.3	Questionnaire	26
3.5	Data collection strategies	26
3.6	Data analysis	26
3.7	Research setting	27
3.8	Summary of the chapter	27

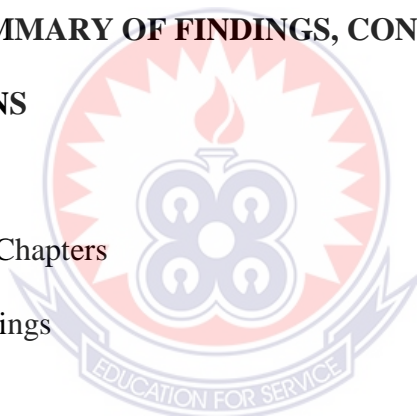
CHAPTER FOUR: THE SEMANTIC PROPERTIES OF OPENING VERBS

4.0	Introduction	29
4.1	The Basic Semantics of Dagbani OPENING verbs	29
4.1.1	The basic semantics of <i>yooi</i> ‘open’	30
4.1.2	The basic semantics of <i>piligi</i> ‘open’	33
4.1.3	The basic semantics of <i>vii</i> ‘slight open’	34
4.1.4	The basic semantics of <i>kayiki</i> ‘slight open’	36
4.1.5	The basic semantics of <i>yaai</i>	38
4.1.6	The basic semantics of <i>karigi</i> CUT-OPEN verb	40
4.1.7	The basic semantics of <i>bɔyi</i> ‘CUT/BREAK OPEN’	41
4.1.8	The basic semantics of <i>neei</i> open verb	43
4.1.8	Interim summary	44
4.2	Semantic extensions of Dagbani OPEN verbs	44
4.2.1	Metaphorical extensions of <i>yooi</i>	45

4.2.2	Metaphorical extensions of <i>piligi</i>	47
4.2.3	Metaphorical extensions of <i>vii</i>	48
4.2.4	Metaphorical extensions of <i>kayiki</i>	50
4.2.5	Metaphorical extensions of <i>karigi</i>	52
4.2.6	Metaphorical extensions of <i>bɔyi</i>	54
4.2.7	Metaphorical extensions of <i>yaaɪ</i>	55
4.2.8	Metaphorical extensions of <i>neeɪ</i>	56
4.3	Interim summary	59

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0	Introduction	60
5.1	Summary of the Chapters	60
5.2	Summary of findings	61
5.3	Conclusions	64
5.4	Recommendations	66
	REFERENCES	68



ABSTRACT

This thesis offers analysis of Dagbani verbs that denote opening. Dagbani is a member of the Mabia language family and spoken in the Northern region of Ghana. The study analysis OPEN verbs in Dagbani with special focus on their basic semantics and the kind of nouns every verb collocates. It also considered metaphorical extensions that these verbs exhibit as they are used by native speakers to code certain interesting proverbial expressions in the language. The study obtained data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data is obtained during a fieldwork conducted to this study. During the time of my interaction with the research participants, the information obtained during the discussions were recorded using a digital audio recorder. These recording were taken in the Bimbilla, Kpabi and Changli communities.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This thesis discusses the semantics of Dagbani opening verbs. In the literature of verbs semantics, there has been so many aspects of the various verbs (stative and motion verbs, eating and drinking verbs, cutting, and breaking verbs, just to mention but a few) discussed in many languages such as Dagbani, Gurene, Akan, Ewe, Tafi, and many others. Even though there have been some appreciable linguistic studies on the semantic aspects of verbs in some languages, Dagbani is yet to receive much attention on this linguistic aspect. This study therefore sets to investigate the basic semantics of opening verbs as well as the extended meanings associated with these verbs.

This chapter being the introductory chapter gives a general outline of the study. Beyond this section, the chapter continues with section 1.1, which provides a brief description of Dagbani as a language and moves to discuss the background of the study of opening verbs in section 1.2. The section 1.3 of this research presents the statement of the problem that underpins this research while the purpose of the study is presented in section 1.4. In section 1.5, the objectives of this research are provided. Also, the research questions that this study intends answering are given in section 1.6. The significance of the research as well as its delimitations are discussed in sections 1.7 and 1.8 respectively. An interim summary of this chapter is given in section 1.9

1.2 Background of the language

Dagbani is one of the Mabia subgroup of languages that belong to the South-Western Oti-Volta family as contained in (Issah, 2018). This language is spoken in the Northern region of Ghana, West Africa. It is said to be the most widely spoken language in Northern Ghana (Issahaku, 2021) as it is spoken by about two million people in the country. Native speakers of Dagbani refer to themselves as Dagbamba and they are considered the largest ethnic group in the Northern part of Ghana, Salifu and M-minibo (2014) as cited in (Issahaku, 2021). It is also worth noting that this group of people like any other ethnic group in Northern Ghana are predominantly farmers who engage in both crop and animal production.

Dagbani has Nayahili, Nanunli and Tomosili as its major dialects. Previous studies (Olawsky, 1999; Hudu, 2010; Issah, 2018; Inusah and Issahaku, 2019; Issahaku, 2021; etc) identified Nayahili and Nanunli as the Eastern dialects and Tomosili as the Western dialect.

1.2 Background to the study

This thesis discusses the semantics of opening verbs in Dagbani. The opening verbs are used to describe either partial or complete separation of objects or items. In Dagbani, material separation may either be caused by an agent or may not, for instance, verbs in cutting category involves an agent while those in break category does not necessarily require an agent Bashiru (2021). The use of the opening verb in Dagbani could differ depending on the separation nature of the object or the item.

The verb, as we all know, is the word that denote the major activity or state of the subject in a sentence and without which, a sentence cannot have a meaning. Therefore, verbs play very critical role in language structure. The opening verbs in Dagbani are used in different ways and in different contexts to achieve meanings, since it is the object or the item which determines that, they all have different semantic realization in the language. Separation verbs are a category of verbs that describe events and actions that bring about object separation or disintegration (Guerssel et al. 1985; Hale and Keyser 1987). Of late, this topic has been of great interest to syntacticians although Dagbani is yet to be addressed on this topic.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Language scholars concern themselves with the development of natural languages. Dagbani has since experienced an appreciable study on both the literature and grammar aspects of the language. Studies on the literature aspects of Dagbani include Salifu (2008), Dahamani (2017), Inusah and Issahaku (2019), Plockey and Ahmed (2016), Salifu and M-minibo (2014), Rasheed (2019), Issahaku (2018), Musah (2015), Plockey and Abdulai (2018) and others. Other existing works that concern the grammar aspect of Dagbani are Wilson (1972), Olawsky (1997, 1999, and 2004), Hudu (2005, 2010, 2012,) Abukari (2019), Issah (2011b, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2015a, 2015b, 2020) Issah and Smith (2020), Issah and Acheampong (2021), Inusah & Mahama (2019), Issahaku (2021), Iddrisu (2020), Neindow (2018), Shaibu (2021), Musah (2021), Bashiru (2021), Salifu (2021) and many more. Considering this high volume of studies in Dagbani, little attention is given to the semantic aspect of the language and verb semantics is one good

example. The only known works on verb semantics in Dagbani are Bashiru (2021) and Salifu (2021). Whereas Salifu (2021) focuses on semantics of verbs of consumption, Bashiru (2021) discusses the semantics and metaphorical extensions of ‘Cut and Break Verbs’. This work gives a broad analysis of verbs denoting cutting and breaking. It therefore did not give detail analysis of verbs that denote opening (i.e. activities involving opening and enclosed object by mean of separation.). This thesis therefore seeks to fill this research gap by collecting data on verbs of this kind and analyzing them on their basic and extended semantic properties they exhibit in Dagbani.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the basic semantics and metaphorical extensions of verbs of opening in Dagbani.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i) identify the various opening verbs in Dagbani,
- ii) examine the semantic use of the opening verbs in Dagbani,
- iii) examine the metaphorical extensions of the opening verbs in Dagbani.

1.6 Research questions

- i) What are the various opening verbs in Dagbani?
- ii) What are the basic semantic properties of opening verbs in Dagbani?
- iii) What metaphorical extensions are associated with the opening verbs in Dagbani?

1.7 Significance of the study

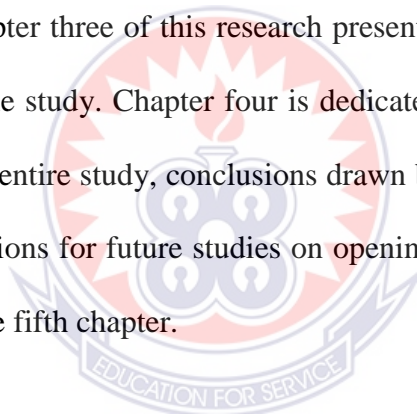
The findings of this study will be significant in various ways. First and foremost, it will provide insight into the semantics of opening verbs providing data from a language in which this has not been studied. The data could therefore be providing further insight into the semantic behavior of the opening verbs. In addition, the outcome of this research will also contribute to the existing literature of the language. The study will also serve as a reference material for others who will want to study into the area. The documentation of this aspect of the study will largely promote the learning of opening verbs as they appear differently in different environments. It will also serve as an introduction to the semantics of opening verbs structure in Dagbani.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The scope of the study is to examine the semantics of opening verbs and their metaphorical extension in Dagbani. As a result, only the basic meanings of verbs as well as their semantic extensions will be given full attention. Also, this study is limited to verbs that only denote opening in Dagbani. Moreover, other linguistic processes in the domain of morphology, phonology, syntax, and others will not receive any attention in the data analysis sections during the course of this research. Lastly, as mentioned earlier, Dagbani is made up of three dialects and data for this study is presented in the dialect which is recognized as the official dialect of Dagbani.

1.9 Organization of the study

This work is organized into five chapters. Chapter one discusses the general overview of the thesis including the background to the study. It also presents some details of Dagbani and its speakers, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions the study sorts to answer, the significance of the study, delimitation of the study and how the thesis is organized. Chapter two gives an account on two components of the study: review of related literature and theoretical framework. The scope of the literature review covers the general notion of opening verbs in Kwa languages and some non-African languages. The theoretical framework is also dealt with in this chapter. The chapter three of this research presents the methodology employed in obtaining the data for the study. Chapter four is dedicated to discussing and analyze the data. A summary of the entire study, conclusions drawn based on the analysis of the data as well as recommendations for future studies on opening verbs in Dagbani or any other language are given in the fifth chapter.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This section reviews literature on the semantics of opening verbs across languages in the world. It looks at verbs of openings as a component of separation verbs which include cut and break verbs and opening or detachment verbs in languages. This paper focuses on verbs that describe the creation of access to an object by removing barrier(s), for example ‘to open’, ‘to unlock’, ‘to uncover’ etc, which is generally termed as opening or detachment verbs (Bowerman 2005, Bowerman & Choi 2001). It is apparent that this domain of the separation verbs is yet to receive scholarly attention in many languages as compared to cut and break verbs (Ameka & Hill 2020). Bowerman and Choi (2001) as well as Bowerman (2005) record that there are some limited data on the opening verbs in English and Korean, while in Atintono (2019), a small portion is maintained for opening verbs in Gurene. This section, therefore, explores the existing scholarly views on opening verbs cross-linguistically, paying peculiar attention to their literal and metaphorical extensions in the languages.

2.2 Separation verbs

The separation of things into parts or constituents using different means is an everyday activity that humans everywhere undertake (Ameka & Hill 2020). They note that the way in which humans categorize such events and label them in verbs varies considerably across languages and cultures. In a cross-linguistic study of the categorization of separation events, Majid et al. (2007: p147) note that separation events such as opening,

taking apart and peeling, which involve minimal destruction of the affected object and are mostly reversible, were distinguished from those involving cutting and breaking, which involve significant material destruction accompanied by non-reversible change in the integrity of the object.

The separation verbs have been broadly classified into two namely, cut and break verbs often recorded as C&B verbs as one group and opening or detachment verbs as another separate group (cf. Atintono 2019, Majid et al. 2007a:134, Guerssel et al. 1985, Ameka & Essegbey 2007, Agyepong & Osam 2020). According to Guerssel et al. (1985), the C&B verbs describe such separations that involve the severance or the destruction of objects while the opening or detachment verbs describe the separation of a distinguishable part of an object from another. Ameka and Essegbey (2007) opine that the two classes are distinguished based on their semantic properties, and that in turn supposedly influences their syntactic behavior. According to them, break verbs participate in the causative/inchoative alternation in which the transitive sentence expresses an agent acting on a patient/theme while its intransitive counterpart expresses the theme entering into a state (e.g., John broke the cup vs the cup broke). Their argument takes precedence from Guerssel et al. (1985) who posit similar assertions and however, add that cut verbs do not participate in the causative/inchoative alternation instead, their intransitive counterparts, if a language allows it, are only supposed to be middle constructions e.g., the bread cuts easily (cf. Atintono 2019, Ameka & Essegbey 2007).

Schaefer and Egbokhare (2012) aver that separation verbs in Emai show a great deal of variability in their co-occurrence with a particle they term as; a change of state (CS) particle *a*. According to them, the CS particle *a* does not correlate with separation type identified at the level of minimal versus maximal destruction, but a more specific level of OPEN versus CUT and BREAK correlations begin to appear within subtypes of CUT and BREAK where the CS particle *frames* are not consistently associated with some verbs, while being obligatory across all frames with others. This kind of construction is not evidenced among many languages especially, within the Mabia language fraternity.

Separation verbs are a category of verbs that describe events and actions that bring about object separation or disintegration (Guerssel et al. 1985; Hale and Keyser 1987). After exploring four unrelated languages Berber, English, Hocak and Walpiri, Guerssel et al. (1985) propose a classification of separation verbs into two categories; CUT and BREAK, named after the most prominent representatives in English. According to them, CUT verbs describe separation events that involve the use of bladed or sharp instruments such as a knife, pair of scissors or a needle to create a cut. Atintono (2019) maintains that the verbs under this group lexicalize cause, that is to say that they provide information on the manner of the change. According to him, BREAK verbs conversely, refer to such separations that are not carried out with an instrument and, therefore, do not lexicalize instrument or manner, but rather result. Ameka and Essegbey (2007) record that the semantics associated with the two verbal classes has implications for their syntactic behavior. They basically support that BREAK verbs participate in the

causative/inchoative alternation, while CUT verbs, however, do not participate in this type of alternation. To them, CUT verbs rather occur in the conative alternations.

Cross-linguistically, Ameka and Hill (2020) observe that the extension of lexical categories used to describe separation events across languages of the world can be captured by a small number of dimensions. According to them;

“....the events can be distinguished on the basis of how predictable the location of a separation is carried out in an object (Dimension1), tearing events are very often honored with a verb of their own (Dimension 2), and snapping events are likely to be distinguished from smashing events (Dimension 3).

(Ameka & Hill 2020: 145).

The continue to argue that there is no uniform way of categorizing the separation verbs across languages, as the none of the languages they investigated prove that the categorization of the C&B events differ from one language to another. For instance, they record enormous differences in the raw number of lexical categories into which speakers of different languages sorted the C&B clips, with Yeli Dnye speakers using only three verbs to describe the entire set, and Tzeltal speakers using more than fifty. There were also striking differences in the placement of category boundaries; the partitioning of Dimension 1 by English versus German, and by English versus Sranan, as discussed above. But this kind of variation plays out within a constrained space, and it can be well captured with a limited number of dimensions (Ameka & Hill 2020).

The assertion made by Ameka and Hill holds true as Bohnermeyer et al (2001:90) avers that “English has the general verb break that can be used regardless of what kind of object is broken, in what manner it is broken, or what instrument is used to break it; while pinpointing K'iche' Maya, in contrast, which has no such general break verb, but instead provides different verbs for different types of objects”. Within the Mbia languages, the claim made by Bohnermeyer et al (2001) also holds true in Dagbani, Gurene, Kusaal among others (cf. Bashiru 2021, Atintono 2019, 2013). These facts suggest that across these languages, breaking is framed as a causal chain involving an activity, an instrument, and a state change caused directly by the instrument and indirectly by the activity in which the instrument is employed.

2.2 Opening verbs

This category of separation verbs unlike the cut and break verbs, describe the semantics of opening or detaching one distinguishable part of an object from another (Atintono 2019). According to him, opening verbs describe the semantics of separation which involves opening, removing or detaching part of an object or a whole object from another. He posits that the instrument that is usually used to perform the separation described by the verbs of opening is hand. Ameka and Hill (2020) refine this assertion by adding that the resultant state of the separation described by opening verbs for most parts does not usually lead to the destruction of the object and often can be reversible.

Similarly, Majid et al. (2007: p147) distinguish opening verbs from C&B verbs by noting that opening verbs describe separation events such as opening, taking apart and peeling,

involve minimal destruction of the affected object and are mostly reversible, whereas C&B verbs describe cutting and breaking which involve significant material destruction accompanied by irreversibility of the integrity of the object involved.

Bowerman (2005) avers that verbs of opening in most languages are limited in number compared to their cut and break counterparts. Similarly, Atintono (2019) identifies several of C&B verbs in Gurene but found out that verbs of opening events are limited in number. He identifies and describe the semantics of only ten opening verbs in Gurene, while alluding to the fact that opening verbs are limited in number as compared to the other separation verbs in Gurune. According to him, all the opening verbs in Gurene describe different types of separation events which involve either opening, removing or detaching of objects such as tins, boxes, cups, doors, windows, and pen tops which are either closed or stacked together into each other. He opines further that most of these separation events are also reversible, without the material destruction of the objects involved. Below are the analysis of the verbs of opening in Gurene by Atintono (2019).

Table 1: Opening verbs in Gurene opening

Verb	Meaning	Instrument	Object (Examples)	Manner
1. <i>yo'e</i> (pl. <i>yo'ose</i>)	open, generic	hands	doors, jars, bags, drawers, cabinet, zips, cupboards	separation with no destruction, reversible
2. <i>ya'e</i> (pl. <i>ya'ase</i>)	open, of mouth or entrance	hands	mouth of animates, openings of objects	separation with no destruction

3. <i>ga'e</i>	open, separate	hands, metals or spontaneous	belts, buttons, interlocked objects, wrestling contestants	minimal force required to separate
4. <i>lake</i>	open, of flat objects	hands or spontaneous	books, paper, clothing, skins, purse, wallet	partial or complete separation, reversible
5. <i>vuke</i>	open, remove	hands or spontaneous	hats, lids, tops of objects	complete separation
6. <i>suke</i>	remove, of	hands or	container with	complete separation
	container with convex base	spontaneous	convex base	
7. <i>vake</i>	remove	hands or natural force e.g wind	thatch, roofs	complete separation
8. <i>foe</i>	remove, of loose grip	hands or natural force	books on shelf, stacked plates or cups, cards in a pack, arrows	complete separation
9. <i>fuke</i>	remove, of firm attachment	hands, natural force	pillars, poles, pegs	complete separation
10. <i>vue</i>	remove, of large objects or plants	hands, machines, natural force	trees, plants, pillars, poles	complete separation

Atintono (2019:21)

2.2.1 *yo'e* 'open, generic'

According to Atintono, the general verb for open in Gurene is *yo'e*, which is used to describe the separation of objects such as doors of houses and vehicles, jars, bags, cupboards, drawers, cabinets, and zips of clothing.

1) *Budaa la yo'e la kuleŋa*

man DEF open FOC door

'The man opened the door'

He points out that, in any case that this verb is used to describe a separation, the distinguishable parts of the object are separated from each other without any destruction of the parts involved, and could be reverse to its natural state.

2.2.2 *ya'ε* 'open, of mouth or entrance'

Apart from the general term for opening, Gurene employs several verbs to describe detachment events which are always collocative to the specific objects involve (Atintono 2019). According to him, one of such verbs is *ya'ε* which is used to describe the opening of mouths of animates or the entrance of objects. He lists the example below as a spontaneous text for an illustration.

2) *Bia la ya'ε la nɔɔrɛ ti ba le e*
 Child DEF open FOC mouth and 3PL feed 3SG
 'The child opened his/her mouth and they fed him.'

2.2.3 *ga'ε* 'open, of buttons, belts, etc.'

According to Atintono (2019), *ga'ε* as a verb of opening, involves the unlocking of objects that are fastened such as buttons or belts on clothing, seat belts on cars and planes. He added that its usage is applicable to the separation of two objectives or entities in a tight fit or firm grip.

3) A *kuriga la ga'arega la ga'ε mε*

3SG shorts DEF button DEF open AFF.

'His shorts button is opened.'

He observes further that these prototypical use of the verb *ga'ε* are accompanied by the use of the word to describe the separation when objects such as rings, hoes, ploughs are interlocked and needs separation. He notes further that when wrestlers are locked up in a wrestling contest or when boxers hold each other tightly during a fight and need separation by a referee, the verb *ga'ε* is used in Gurene.

2.2.6 **lake 'open or overturn, of flat object'**

Atintono holds the view that *lake* as a verb of opening in Gurene, generally describe the detachment or turning of a flat object that is attached e.g. the turning of a page of a book, a cover of purse or a wallet. Example 4 below shows how the verb *lake* is used in Gurene.

4) A *lake gɔŋɔ la mε.*

3SG open book FOC PFT

'He turned the page of a book.'

2.2.7 **vuke 'open or remove, of hat, lid or top, box or a container'**

The semantic collocation of the *vuke* describes the opening of a lid or top, box or a container in Gurene (Atintono 2019). According to him, this verb is used when a speaker

wants to express the opening a box or a lid of a bowl or pen top, turn a container face up such as a bowl, pot or calabash. He provides the example to buttress his assertion.

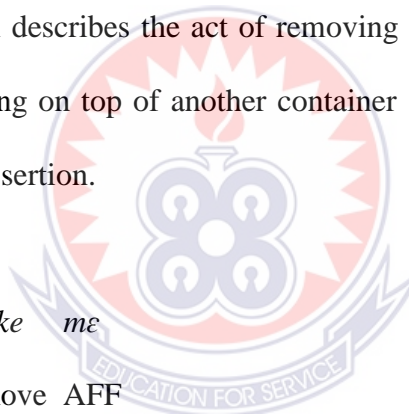
5) *A vuke la daka la bii dukɔ la lija*

3SG open FOC box DEF or pot DEF lid

‘S/he opened the box or lid of the pot.’

2.2.6 *suke* ‘remove, of container with convex base

This is another separation verb which shares similar semantic components the verb *vuke* in Gurene is *suke* which describes the act of removing or taking off a container or a lid with a convex base sitting on top of another container (Atintono 2019). The illustration below exemplifies the assertion.



6) *...dukɔ la lija suke mɛ*

... pot DEF lid remove AFF

‘The lid of the pot is removed.’

2.2.7 *vake* ‘remove, of thatch or roofs’

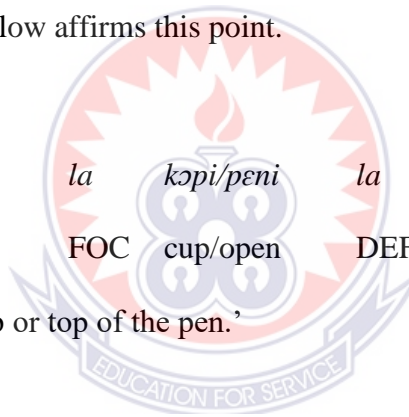
Atintono points out that *vake* just like *vuke* and *suke* also describes the removal of objects such as a thatch or roof either by humans or some other natural forces such as wind or hurricane.

- 7) ...*kusebego n vake detine la muɔ*
 ...wind FOC remove hut DEF grass
 ‘...the wind removed the thatch of the hut.’

2.2.8 *foe* ‘remove, from loose or sloppy attachment’

Similarly, the verb *foe* also describes the removal or the detachment of objects which are well fixed or firmed in Gurene (Atintono *ibid*). According to him, the removal of such objects that are stacked together or from a pack such as cups, plates, books stacked in shelves, pack of cards, arrows in a quiver are described with the use of the verb *foe in Gurene*. The example below affirms this point.

- 8) A *foe la kɔpi/pɛni la lija.*
 3SG remove FOC cup/open DEF lid
 ‘S/he removed the cup or top of the pen.’



2.2.9 *fuke* ‘remove, of firm attachment’

This is another separation event verb in Gurene as shown in the 9th column of table 1 taken from Atintono (2019). He asserts that this opening verb concerns with the removal of long objects that are firmly fixed to the ground or stacked to each other. According to him, the objects which can be described by the verb include; pillars, poles, pegs, and such objects which are firmly stuck to the ground or are firmly stacked to each other requiring the application of strong force to remove them. Consider this example below, taken from Atintono (*ibid.*).

9) *Kaara la n fuke bua ka'a la.*

Farmer DEF FOC remove goat peg DEF

‘It is the farmer who removed the goat’s peg.’

2.2.10 *vue* ‘remove, usually of plants or large objects with force from the ground’

The final detachment verb that describes opening of objects in Gurene is *vue* which describes a specific separation type involving the removal of plants or large poles or pillars firmly fixed to the ground (Atintono 2019). He maintains that the verb is semantically similar to the verb in *fuke* which also describes the removal of firm attachments but differs from the latter from the point of the attachment in Gurene. He asserts that the verb *vue* is concerned with the removal of firm attachment to the ground but does not include objects that are stacked together as is the case with *fuke*. The example below authenticates this assertion.

10) *Saa kusebego la n vue tia la.*

Rain wind DEF FOC remove tree DEF

‘The rainstorm uprooted the tree.’

Atintono adds that the description of the separation events such as thinning of young millet plants as well as the harvesting of peanuts also employ the use of the verb *vue* in Gurene.

2.2.11 The semantics of the verb *yooi* ‘OPEN in Dagbani

Pertinent to the semantics of opening verbs in Gurene is how the verbs is realized in Dagbani; another Mabilia language spoken in Norther part of Ghana. In the analysis of cut and break verbs in Dagbani, Bashiru (2021) records that *yooi* ‘open’ such as the opening of a tin is preserved for the description of opening of objects rather than of cut or break. He however avers that this verb could also be used to describe the opening of a topmost part of tins which is sometimes assisted by the use of a sharp instrument, thereby causing a minimal or maximal destruction of the tin in Dagbani. He adds that the act depends on two instances; one is forming a small hole on a tin like milk to bring out the liquid content in it. The other one is to cut open the lead of a thin in other to have access to what is in it or to be used for a purpose. *Yooi* is also use when a container due to rusting formed a hole. This is shown in (11a-b) below.

- 11) a. *Sua ka n zaŋ yooi miliki kuŋkɔŋ maa.*
 Knife FOC 1SG used open milk tin DEF
 ‘It is a knife I used to open the tin of milk’

- b. *Yakubu zaŋ la sua yooi kamantoosi.*
 Yakubu use FOC knife open tomatoes
 ‘Yakubu has used a knife to open the tomatoes.’

Bashiru opines that even though, *yooi* is a detachment verb that is used to describe material cutting by which holes are created with the use of a bladed instrument in Dagbani, the verb has its outside usage in the language. According to him, *yooi* could be

metaphorically extended to mean opening something that is closed or to open a new thing as illustrated in (12a) or creating an opportunity for others as seen in (12b). The illustration in (12a-c) shows an instance where the verb *yooi* is extended. Where someone is running diarrhea the anus is assumed to be opened for easy defecation since he/she excretes frequently.

12) a. *O gbuni n yooi.*

2SG anus FOC open

Lit: He/she anus have opened.

‘He/she is running’

b. *Bε yooi soli ti bε ya nachim-ba*

3PL pierce road give 3PL hometown young male-PL

Lit: They have pierced road for the youth in their community.

‘They have made a progressive way for the young men in their hometown’

c. *Zuŋɔ ka bε yooi ti ya daa*

Today FOC 3PL pierced 1PL hometown market

Lit: They pierce our hometown market today’

‘The inaugurated our hometown market today’

2.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, humans undertake the activity of separating things into parts or constituents either with the use of instruments or other different means on daily bases. The verbs that describe this phenomenon of activities is generally termed as separation verbs. It is noted that these separation verbs are categorized in to two major components known as the cut and break verbs, and opening or detachment verbs (cf. Ameka & Hill 2020, Atintono 2019, Ameka & Essegbey 2007, Narasimhan 2007). It is generally recorded that the semantic categorization of the verbs varies from one language to another, as Majid et al (2007) aptly point out that the ways in which humans categorize such events and label them in verbs varies considerably across languages and cultures. Cross-linguistically, literature show that the separation events, such as opening, detachment and peeling, which involve zero or minimal destruction of the affected object and are mostly reversible belong to the opening or detachment category of the separation verbs. This category is distinguished from the cut and break category which involves cutting and breaking of the affected objects, which usually lead to a total or a significant material destruction accompanied by a non-reversible state of the integrity of the object(s) involved. The former is the focus of the current paper.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to present the methodological procedures of this research. Central issues in this chapter include a discussion on the research approach and design, the sources of data, the study population, the sample size, sampling techniques and instruments used in the collection of the data. It shall as well give a brief note on the delimitations of the study

3.1 Research design

For the purpose of answering the couple of questions that are elusive regarding verbs in the open domain, I used ethnography as the research design. According to (Creswell, 1998, p.90) “...ethnography involves extended observations of a group, most often through participant observation, in which the researcher is immersed in the day-to-day lives of the people and observes and 40 interviews a group’s participants.” As a native speaker, this research design afforded me the opportunity to collect the data through participant observations, and personal involvement with members. This research design is considered appropriate due to Creswell’s (2013, p.90) remark that “‘Ethnographers study the meaning of the behavior, the language, and the interaction among members of a culture-sharing group. The task [of ethnographers] is to document the culture, the perspectives and practices of the people in these settings...’” Thus, in ethnography, a researcher aims at describing and interpreting the ‘shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group.’ The population in this study

is the speakers Nanunli dialect. The researcher collected the data from a representative of these speakers but the findings will be of course representing these whole native speakers of the dialect (cf. Dörnyei, 2007; Gall et al.; 2007). Thus, the population in this study is the speakers of the Nanunli dialect of Dagbani.

3.2 Research approach

The approach in this thesis is qualitative. I arrived at this decision because the thesis is descriptive-oriented. Thus, the thesis aims to give an adequate description of open verbs base my analysis on the Jackendoff (1990) Conceptual Structural Theory (CLT) to account for the phenomenon in Dagbani. This approach is also considered appropriate because the thesis primarily intends to take non-numeric data from a natural environment and the analysis will be done using non-statistical methods, (Creswell, 1998; Dörnyei, 2007). Another motivation for adopting this approach is due to Creswell's (1998, p. 15) remarks that qualitative research is "...an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explores the social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting."

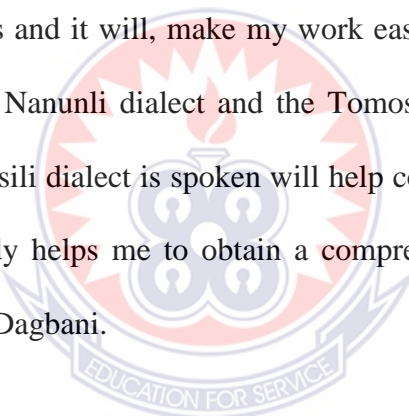
3.3 Population

Population is a relevant part of research, since it is not possible for the researcher to use every individual in a study like this. Twenty (20) participants were used for this study. Out of these, four (4) were occupational participants from each of the communities. Ten (10) monolingual speakers of Dagbani were also selected from these communities. Six

(6) consultants or Dagbani teachers were also interviewed making the total number of twenty (20) participants.

3.4 Research setting

Four communities, Bimbilla, Pusura, Sakasaka, and Changli were used for this study. The first two communities are all in the Nunumba North Municipality while Sakasaka and Changli are in Tamale Metropolis. The choice of Bimbilla and Pusura communities is appropriate because it helps me to communicate easily with the participants selected for the study since we speak the same dialect of Dagbani. I am also a resident of one of the selected communities and it will, make my work easier in data gathering. There is a slight variation between Nanunli dialect and the Tomosili, the choice of Sakasaka and Changli where the Tomosili dialect is spoken will help conform it. The selection of these two dialects for the study helps me to obtain a comprehensive analysis of open verbs across all the dialects of Dagbani.



3.5 Sampling technique and sample size

The sampling technique used in obtaining the sample size is purposive sampling. Thus, the participants were selected based on their ability to provide the needed information to serve the purpose of this research. These individuals are information-rich concerning the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2008). The general population consists of all speakers of the Tomosili and Nanunli dialects of Dagbani who live in Dagbanj and Nanun (The geographical area of the Nunumba people). Out of the speakers of the Tomosili and Nanunli dialects, people who directly contributed to the data in the thesis known as the

sample (size) in the literature were twenty. The sample size included speakers from all the communities in the two districts, where the dialects are spoken. This was intended to have a representation of participants from varied settings. Five were taken from Pusura, five from Bimbila, five from Sakasaka, and five from Changli town. Even though sex was not considered in the 41 analysis, the researcher took ten men and ten women to maintain gender parity and variety. The participants were either proficient in both English and Dagbani.

3.6 Sources of data

The two main sources of data collection, which include primary and secondary sources, are used for the data-gathering process for this study. These sources are more appropriate because the primary sources helped me to get first-hand information on the data for the analysis. The secondary sources of the data aspect contribute to the data-gathering process by telling what writers have said about the study under consideration. The following are various sources used in gathering data for the study.

3.6.1 Primary source of data

Primary sources of data gathering are the data collected through first-hand information from sources such as documents, relics or artifacts mainly through interviews or participants observation. The primary data for this study is collected through elicitation and response, interviews, and observation. The researcher is also using his native speaker introspection as a method in collecting data on “open” verbs in Dagbani.

3.6.2 Secondary source of data collection

The secondary sources are obtained from other related materials and there come in several forms. Literary sources were much consulted. The aim of consulting the literary works is to find out how each author explained the entry of open verbs in Dagbani. Three published Dagbani dictionaries including, Mahama (2004, and 2016) are consulted to get an in-depth analysis of some entries of open verbs and their meaning in Dagbani. Olawsky (1999), a grammar book is also consulted to look at how verbs function in sentences.

3.6.3 Questionnaire

Another data collection strategy that I used is a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to cover the information about Dagbani open verbs. I used Bohemeyer et al (2001) instances of video clips were used as a questionnaire for participants to give their Dagbani equivalent. However, on the part of a metaphorical extension of those verbs, an open type was employed rather than the closed type because I wanted the respondents to express themselves. Participants were asked to mention another way the open verbs can be used in Dagbani without referring to physical opening.

3.7 Data collection strategies

The main techniques that the researcher used to collect the data for this study are interviews. This is because it allows more room for the participants to express themselves confidently and freely. In the interview section, the researcher uses both structured and unstructured interviews. However, the unstructured interview is highly incorporated by the researcher. Apart from the elicitations, the researcher also conducted interviews accompanied by narratives.

3.8 Data analysis

The data is analyzed and guided by the conceptual structural model of Jackendoff (1990). This theory is appropriate because it makes good use of the cognitive domain of language acquisition. Speakers of a language can interpret lexemes, clauses and sentences in their best way depending upon the knowledge they have concerning the language. The analysis will be done based on the verbs of open and the structures that are embedded in sentences to provide both physical and metaphorical meaning to those verbs in Dagbani. In Dagbani, open verbs either may be caused by an object or may not. This theory makes it necessary to determine whether a verb lexicalized with an instrument or not. The open verbs collected will be transcript into Dagbani and then translated to English. However, the data is presented in Dagbani but the analyses will be in English for both speakers and non- speakers of Dagbani to benefit.

3.8 Summary of the chapter

This chapter considered the methodology that is used for this study. It considered the qualitative research design use for the study due to on-statistical nature of the study, a purposive sampling technique used, population of 20 as participants for the study. This chapter also looked at both primary and secondary source of data gathering, data collection and the research setting.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE SEMANTIC PROPERTIES OF OPENING VERBS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents discussions on the semantic properties of opening verbs in Dagbani as they are commonly used in the daily conversations among Dagbamba. In this chapter, data is presented to aid discussions on the basic semantic properties of each of the OPENING verbs identified in this study. Another major aspect of the semantics of OPENING verbs discussed in this chapter is the semantic extensions of these kind of verbs. Generally, it is proven in the literature on how useful OPENING verbs are in terms of coding metaphorical meanings in language. OPENING verbs in Dagbani like other languages have proven fruitful in this respect.

In this chapter, I first identify the various OPENING verbs available in Dagbani and provide analysis of the verbs based on their basic semantic properties in the language in section 4.1 and its sub-sections. This is where each OPENING verb will be examined on the basic semantic interpretation that a verb may be attributed to. The kind of meaning associated with a particular verb, when used with different agents or patients, will also be considered in the analysis. In the section 4.2 and its sub-sections of this chapter, consideration is given to the semantic extensions of these OPENING verbs.

4.1 The Basic Semantics of Dagbani OPENING verbs

This section presents discussions on the basic semantic properties of Dagbani OPENING verbs. In the following discussions, I analyze the data with special focus on the

instrumentality, agentivity and transitivity in the argument structure of verbs under this category (Atintono, 2019; Majid, 2008; Bashiru, 2021). The table below provides an overview of Dagbani open verbs.

Table 2. Summary of Dagbani open verbs

S/N	VERB	MEANING	INSTRUMENT	OBJECT	MANNER
1	<i>yooi</i>	open (prototypical)	hand, knife	doors, jars, bags, sacks,	partial or complete separation and reversible
2	<i>piligi</i>	open of lid or to unroof	hand, wind/storm	lids of bowls and bottles	complete and reversible separation
3	<i>vii</i>	slight open	hand	thatch roof, bags	partial and reversible separation
4	<i>kayiki</i>	slight open	hand	lids of bowls/cups, doors, bags	partial and reversible separation
5	<i>yaai</i>	Open	zero instrument, hand	mouth, armpit	complete and reversible separation
6	<i>karigi</i>	cut open	knife or bladed instrument	ball, bag, animals	complete and irreversible separation
7	<i>bɔyi</i>	cut open into equal parts	knife, hand, cutlass, blade	watermelon, orange, colanuts, apple, co	complete and irreversible separation
8	<i>neei</i>	Open	zero instrument	eye	complete and reversible separation

4.1.1 The basic semantics of *yooi* ‘open’

The verb, *yooi* ‘open’, is the prototypical verb ‘open’, in Dagbani. The *yooi* activity refers to the act of opening an item either by using an instrument or the hand. In the event of *yooi*, there could be other activities such as cut, break, unlock, pull/push before the activity could be successful. Items that go through the *yooi* process are doors, tins, bottles, cups and bowls with lids, and etc. In the event structure of the verb, *yooi* ‘open’,

both agent and patient are required to be involved in the activity. This is to say that transitivity plays a major role in expressing *yooi* events as every event of *yooi* requires a patient. In expressing the activity of *yooi*,

13) a. *Ti yooi la loori maa ka o kpe.*
 1PL open.PFV FOC car DEF CONJ 3SG enter.PFV
 ‘We opened the car and he entered.’

b. *Yoo-mi kuŋkɔŋ maa ka kpaai kamantoonsi maa*
 Open.IMPERV-IMP tin DEF CONJ pour.IMMPERFV tomatoe-
 PL DEF
nij duyu maa ni.
 put.in pot DEF in
 ‘Open the tin and pour the tomatoes into the pot.’

c. *Yumzaa yooi duno-li maa.*
 Yumzaa open.PFV gate-PL DEF
 ‘Yumzaa has opened the gate.’

d. *Karimbi-a maa yoo-gi o baaji-SG bahi.*
 Student-SG DEF open-PFV 3SG bag-SG throw.PFV
 ‘The student opened his/her bag ajar.’

- e. *Yoo-mi gayi-li-SG ηɔ ti ma.*
 Open.IMPERFV-IMP jar DEM give.IPFV 1SG
 ‘Open this jar for me.’
- f. **Dinnani yooi tia maa.*
 Dinnani open.PFV tree DEF
 *‘Dinnani opened the tree.’

Open verbs in this category are usually transitive in nature and may not necessarily require instruments in carrying out the action. This activity is carried out using the hand. As a result, the hand is the perceived instrument by default. It also involves an application of some amount of force either by pushing or pulling as we have in (13a, 13b and 13c). In the process of *yooi*, the agent could also engage in rotating the cover or lid of the object before the activity could be successful as (13e) shows. This verb could also require zipping like we have in (13d) if the mouth of the bag is enclosed with a zip. It is important to note here that this activity is reversible and except in only situations where an instrument is used to make a cut on the object before opening it. In this case, the action cannot be reversed because of the CUTTING activity performed which is an irreversible verb. General, items which either, have no lids, covers, or which are not enclosed do not collocate with the verb, OPEN. This is illustrated in (13f) below. So, it is semantically incorrect to open a tree in Dagbani.

4.1.2 The basic semantics of *piligi* ‘open’

Piligi refers to the act of opening items (bowls and pots) that have lids. This is done by lifting the lid up to detach it from the mother object. This activity can be reversed and does not require any instrument in carrying out the exercise. Its opposite is *pili* ‘cover’. This verb also refers to the process of removing the roof of a building. In addition, the OPEN verbs under this category collocate with objects which have covers on top of them. Mention can be made to some of these objects as, bowls, roofs as well as objects covered with blankets. The ungrammatical construction identifies in (14f) shows that this type of OPEN verb does not collocate with object that has no top covers on them. Examples in 14 illustrates where the *piligi* OPEN verb is used.

14) a. *Bia maa m-piligi ηmani maa.*
 Child DEF FOC open.PFV bowl DEF
 ‘It is the child who opened the bowl.’

b. *Laasiche piligi la kɔduyu maa yeli.*
 Laasiche open-IMPERV FOC drinking.pot DEF ajar.
 ‘Laasiche opened the drinking pot ajar.’

c. *Ti yen piligi la duu maa zuηɔ.*
 1PL FUT open.IPFV FOC room DEF today
 ‘We will unroof the room today.’

- d. *Piligi-mi a zipiligu maa ka o pini a.*
 open-IMP 2SG hat DEF CONJ 3SG shave.IMPERFV 2SG

‘Remove your hat and he/she will shave you.’

- e. *Zuŋɔ ka bɛ piligi yili maa.*
 Today FOC 3PL unroof.PFV house DEF

‘It is today that they unroofed the house.’

- f. **Cha-ma nti piligi duu maa ka bɛ kpe.*
 go-IMP CONJ open.IPFV room DEF CONJ 3PL enter.IPFV

‘Go and open the room for them to enter.’

4.1.3 The basic semantics of *vii* ‘slight open’

The *vii* OPEN verb is used in situations where there is a partial OPEN. Speakers use this verb to refer to a slight opening of a roof with thatch (15a) or iron sheets (15b). The verb, *vii* is also used in a situation where a dress worn by someone gets opened slightly, either by win or even human (15c). Also, when soft materials made from textiles and polythene are used to make screen (15d) or cover the body of anything (15e) and it is slightly opened, *vii* is used. The following sentences illustrate how this verb is used in Dagbani. The *vii*-activity verb is also reversible, and its reversed form is *pili/pɔbi* ‘cover’. The OPEN verb, *vii* can also refer to the process of opening a book as we see in (15f). Note that the verb, *vii* OPEN verb is expressed in its singular form as *vii* ‘flip once’ and its plural form as *vihi* ‘flip many times’ as we have in (15f). From the illustration in (15g),

the ungrammatical structure shows that one cannot express the OPEN verb activity with that verb collocating with objects like a bowl.

15) a. *Tampuli n vii mopilli maa.*
 Tampuli FOC open.PFV thatch DEF
 ‘It is Tampuli who slightly opened the thatch.’

b. *Zieyu maa daa vii la taha maa ka kom kpe ti duu.*
 Storm DEF TD open.PFV FOC roofing.sheet DEF CONJ water
 enter.PFV 1PL room
 ‘The storm slightly opened the roofing sheet and water entered our room.’

c. *Vii-mi o mukuru maa ka ti nya.*
 Open-IMP 3SG skirt DEF CONJ 1PL see.IPFV
 ‘Slightly open her skirt for us to see.’

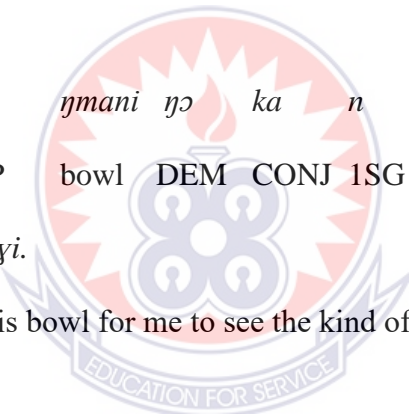
d. *Azima vii la pateesa maa ka yi na.*
 Azima open.PFV FOC screen DEF CONJ come.out.PFV DM
 Azima slightly opened the screen and came out.

- e. *Vii-mi tani sheli din pa teebuli maa zuyu maa*
 open-IMP cloth SPEC which lie.on.PFV table DEF LOC DEF
ka paai tim la n-ti ma na.
 CONJ pick.IPFV medicine REF INF-give.IPFV 1SG DM

Remove the cloth on the table and give the medicine.

- f. *Che ka n vii kundi maa n-ti a.*
 Let FOC 1SG open.IMPERFV book DEF INF-give.IPFV 2SG
 ‘Let me open the book for you.’

- g. **Vii-mi ηmani ηɔ ka n nya bindir’ sheli yi*
 Open-IMP bowl DEM CONJ 1SG see.IPFV food type 2PL
ni dui.
 *‘Open this bowl for me to see the kind of food you prepare.’



4.1.4 The basic semantics of *kayiki* ‘slight open’

This activity of separation involves opening items like eating bowls, doors, underwear, eye, windows, etc) leading to partial opening. In the event structure of *kayiki*, there is an agent and a patient but no instrument involved. The following examples illustrate instances where *kayiki* could be used.

- 16) a. *O kuli kayiki la punu maa ka zu liyiri.*
 3SG just open-PFV FOC door DEF CONJ stole.PFV money

‘He/she just opened the door slightly and stole money.’

- b. *Niina kayiki la o nimbila lihi ma ka gari.*
 Niina open.PFV FOC 3SG eye look.at 1SG CONJ pass.PFV

‘Niina looked at me and passed by.’

- c. *N daa kayiki la n takoro ka nya*
 1SG TD open.PFV FOC 1SG window CONJ see.PFV
be ni chana.
 3PL AUX walk-IMPERFV

‘I opened my window and saw them going.’

- d. *Gbaai kayiki a peto ka dulim ka*
 Just open 2SG underwear CONJ urinate-IMPERFV CONJ
ti chaŋ.
 1PL go-IMPERFV

‘Just slide open your pant and urinate and we go.’

- e. **Kayikimi a noli ka n nya a zilinli*
 Open 2SG mouth CONJ 1SG see.PFV 2SG tongue
maa zuyu yum maa ni be shem.
 DEF top sore DEF FUT be how

*‘Slide-open your mouth for me to see the sore on your tongue.’

INTENDED: Open your mouth small for me to see the sore on your tongue.’

From the data in (16a-16d), it can be observed that the *kayiki* OPEN verb collocates with nouns such as *punu* ‘door’, *nimbila* ‘an eye’, *takoro* ‘window’, and *peto* ‘underwear’ respectively. It however does not collocate with nouns such as *nyirivɔ̃yu* ‘anus’, *noli* ‘mouth’, *bɔ̃yilɔ̃ɲ* ‘armpit’ and *nua* ‘arm’ as does for *yaai* OPEN verb discussed in section 4.1.5. This is why the illustration in (16e) is marked ungrammatical in Dagbani.

4.1.5 The basic semantics of *yaai*

Yaai basically refers to opening of the mouth or armpit. It also describes the act of spreading one’s legs or lifting up one’s arm to hit an item or someone. In the event structure of the *yaai* OPEN verb, instrumentation is given less attention since this verb does not require the use of instrument before carrying out the activity. Also, sentences with *yaai* OPEN verbs require mandatory agent and patient; hence, they are highly transitive verbs. Nouns that collocate with the *yaai* OPEN verb in Dagbani are *nyirivɔ̃yu* ‘anus’, *noli* ‘mouth’, *bɔ̃yilɔ̃ɲ* ‘armpit’ and *nuu* ‘arm’ as some illustrations in (17) show. This verb however does not collocate with *nina* ‘eyes’ and hence, the illicitness in (17d). The only verb that collocates with *nina* ‘eyes’ is the ‘*nei*’ OPEN verb as discussed in section 4.1.8.

- 17) a. *Yaa-mi a noli ka n nya din be di*
 Open-IMP 2SG mouth CONJ 1SG see.IPFV what be 3SG
ni.
 inside
 ‘Open your mouth for me to see what is inside.’

b. *Nasara yaai o bɔyulɔŋ ka pini*
li.

Nasara open.PFV 3SG armpit CONJ shave.PFV
 3SG

‘Nasara opened her armpit and shaved it.’

c. *Wula ka a yaai a naba lala?*
 Why FOC 2SG open.PFV 2SG legs like.that

‘Why have you open your legs like that?’

d. *Dawuni kuli yaai la o bɔyu pam ηme*
 Dawuni just lift.up-PFV FOC 3SG arm so.high playFV
luŋ maa.
 drum DEF

Dawuni just not raise up his hand to play drum.

e. **Dawuni di yaai la o nina pam lihi*
 Dawuni PST open.PFV FOC 3SG eyes widely
 look.PFV

o ma ka la.
 3SG mother CONJ laugh.PFV

‘Dawuni opened his eyes widely and looked at her mother and laughed.’

4.1.6 The basic semantics of *karigi* CUT-OPEN verb

Karigi as an OPEN verb in Dagbani is a process of performing a cut-open activity on items which are enclosed. This process involves cutting the patient with a sharp bladed instrument with precision as mentioned in Atintono (2019) and Bashiri (2021). The *karigi* activity is performed on enclosed objects with soft body such wild and domestic animals, human body, balls etc. The act of performing a surgical operation is also expressed as *karigi* as we have in (18b). In the event structure of the *karigi* OPEN verb, there is an agent and patient. This activity also requires an instrument before a successful *karigi* could take place. They are also highly transitive verbs like the *yaa* OPEN verb. The illustrations in (18c and 18d) show that it is semantically wrong for the *karigi* verb to be used to refer to the act of opening objects like bottle in (18c) or room in (18d).

- 18) a. *Shee ti karigi piɛyɔ maa pɔi ka naan she*
 Unless 1PL open.PFV sheep DEF before CONJ AUX roast.IPFV
o.
 2SG
 ‘Unless we cut.open the sheep before roasting it.’

- b. *Dɔyitenima karigi-ri la payiba puya ka*
 Doctors open-IPFV FOC women stomachs CONJ
yihiri bilie-ri.
 remove.PFV baby-PL
 ‘The doctors open/operate women to remove babies.’

c. **Lahiri karigi koliba maa ka nyu tim*
 Lahiri open glass.bottle DEF CONJ drink.PFV medicine
maa.

DEF

*‘Lahiri cut-opened the glass bottle and drunk the medicine.’

INTENDED: ‘Lahiri opened the glass bottle and took the medicine.’

d. **Tayiyi maa karigi la duu maa ka zu liyiri*
 Thief DEF open FOC room DEF CONJ steal.PFV money
maa.

DEF

*‘The thief cut-opened the room and stole the money.’

INTENDED: ‘The thief opened the room and stole the money.’

4.1.7 The basic semantics of *bɔyi* ‘CUT/BREAK OPEN’

The verb *bɔyi* ‘cut/break open’ describes the act of dividing an enclosed item into through by using a sharp bladed instrument to cut it or using a strong instrument to hit it. This activity could also take place using the hand. Nouns that collocate with *bɔyi* include gourd, coconut, watermelon apple, human head, garden egg, orange, tomatoes, yam¹, cola nut, etc. Apart from cola nuts and orange, the rest of the aforementioned items require a mandatory instrument to carry out the activity of *bɔyi*. Also, *bɔyi* can only be performed with the hand on orange when its outer cover is peeled off. However, in the case of cola

¹ Whenever a piece of yam is divided into parts horizontally, the verb *ɲmaai* is used but when cut vertically, *bɔyi* is used.

nut, the hand is usually the instrument used to carry out the activity of *bɔyi*. Moreover, in the event structure of *bɔyi*, there is a mandatory agent especially situations where cutting must be involved to carry out the action. The only time there may be no agent is when the patient is either a coconut or cola nut. Note also that this verb collocates with objects which are either fruits or vegetables. It is therefore semantically incorrect to refer to the act of opening objects room, bowl, or bottles as *bɔyi* as the illicit construction in (19d) shows. Below are some illustrations for the *bɔyi* verb.

- 19) a. *Ti bɔyi leemu maa n ti bihi maa zaa.*
 1PL open orange DEF FOC give.PFV children DEF all
 ‘We split the orange and gave to the children.’
- b. *Sibiri m bɔyi guli maa.*
 Sibiri FOC split cola nut DEF
 ‘It is Sibiri who split the cola nut.’
- c. *N bɔyi la kamantoonsi maa ka yihi di*
 1SG spli.PFV FOC tomatoes DEF CONJ remove.PFV 3SG
zi maa.
 seeds DEF

- d. *Ti yen bɔyi la gayili maa ka kpaai*
 1PL AUX open.IPFV FOC platic.bottle DEF CONJ pour.IPFV
kom maa zaa nyu.
 water DEF all drink.IPFV
 ‘We will ‘cut open’ the bottle and pour all the water and drink.’
 INTENDED: ‘We will open the bottle and pour all the water and drink.’

4.1.8 The basic semantics of *neei* open verb

The *neei* OPEN verb refers to the opening of the eye. This verb basically collocates with only *nini* ‘eye’ (*nina* ‘eyes’) (20a) unlike the other OPEN verbs discussed in this study. So, it is semantically incorrect to refer to the act of opening the mouth, room, bottle, orange and etc. as *neei* as (20b) illustrates. One may argue that *neei* also collocates with *wuntana* ‘sun’, *goli* ‘moon’, or *furila* ‘lanten/light from electricity’ but these objects do not go through any OPENING process. So we can say here that the *neei* verb is semantically loaded as it can refer to the act of opening or brightening of an object. Below are some illustrations.

- 20) a. *Bia maa pa neei o nina.*
 Child DEF now open.PFV 3SG eyes
 ‘The child has now opened his/her eyes.’

- b. **Cha-ma nti neei a duu/koliba/leemu maa.*
 Go-IMP CONJ open 2SG room/bottle/orange DEF
 *‘Go and open your room/bottle/orange.’

4.1.8 Interim summary

This section, 4.1, discussed the basic semantic properties of OPEN verbs in Dagbani, paying attention to the specific nouns each verb collocates as well as instrumentation. Verbs that require agents and/or patients in their argument structure are also given attention. Data from the discussions showed that except for *karigi* and *bɔyi*, which require a mandatory use of sharp bladed instrument, all the other OPEN verbs (*yooi*, *vii*, *kayiki*, *yaai*, *meei* and *piligi*) do not require the use of instrument before carrying out the activities. It is also shown that OPEN verbs generally are highly agentive since they require an agent to execute the action in the construction. In the following section, 4.2, data for the semantic extensions of the various OPEN verbs shall be presented and discussed.

4.2 Semantic extensions of Dagbani OPEN verbs

This section discusses the semantic extensions of the OPENING verbs in Dagbani. Like is shown in the literature, (Atintono, 2019; Majid, 2008; Bashiru, 2021) verbs do have other semantic interpretations aside the basic meanings assigned to them. This phenomenon is proven fruitful in many languages including Dagbani and is termed as semantic extensions or metaphorical extensions in the literature. Besides its basic meaning where the agent has to physically perform an OPEN activity on the patient

involved, this does not happen in the case where an extended meaning of a verb is expressed. Even though there may be an agent and patient in the event structure, the meaning associated with the expression is far from that. They appear to be proverbial in nature.

4.2.1 Metaphorical extensions of *yooi*

Aside the basic meaning of the *yooi* OPENING verb, there are other meanings associated with this verb which have been useful in the day-to-day conversation by Dagbamba. This verb has several extended meanings in Dagbani. In its extended meaning, it can mean commissioning of a business, an institution. ‘To OPEN’ can also mean ‘to start’. Another metaphorical meaning that can be derived from a structure where the verb, OPEN, is used is ‘pay attention’ or ‘be interactive’. Illustrations in 20 give some metaphorical meanings of the *yooi* ‘OPEN’ verb.

- 21) a. *Tɪŋbanzuyulana ni yooi ashibiti maa bakɔi ɲɔ.*
 President FUT open.IPFV hospital DEF week DM

Lit: ‘The president will OPEN the hospital this week.’

‘The president will commission the hospital this week.’

- b. *Yoo-mi a tiba wum yeltɔya maa vienyɛla.*
 Open-IMP 2SG ears listen speech DEF well

Lit: ‘OPEN your ears and listen to the speech well.’

‘Pay attention to the speech well.’

- c. *Ti toondana maa bi yoori o maŋa.*
 1PL leader DEF NEG open.IPFV 3SG self

Lit: ‘Our leader does not OPEN him/herself.’

‘Our leader is not interactive/sociable.’

- d. *Sibiri mini Azindoo nima ka be zaŋ yooi*
 Sibiri CONJ Azindoo PL CONJ 3PL take.PFV open.PFV
shikuru maa.
 school DEF

Lit: ‘It is Sibiri, Azindoo and others they used to OPEN the school.’

‘It is Sibiri, Azindoo and others that they used to start the school.’

- e. *Pa nyini n daa yooi Miina la?*
 NEG 2SG FOC PST open.PFV Miina REF

Lit: ‘Were you not the one who opened Miina?’

‘Were you not the one who broke Miina’s virginity?’

From the data in (21) it is seen that the *yooi*, OPEN verb is useful in coding metaphorical expressions in Dagbani, which could mean ‘to start something’ and to be more interactive or sociable as (21d) and (21c) show respectively. Another semantic extension that is expressed with the *yooi* OPEN verb is ‘to commission a project’ like a hospital (21a) or ‘to pay attention’ (21b).

Lastly, this verb is also metaphorically used by the youth especially to refer to the act of breaking the virginity of a girl as (21e) illustrates.

4.2.2 Metaphorical extensions of *piligi*

Piligi as an OPEN verb is also used metaphorically to refer to the act of sharing property of a deceased among the Dagbamba. In its use as an act of sharing property, the verb collocates with *kpanjɔyɔ* ‘an indigenous basket with a lid/cover meant to contain valuable personal belongings’. So, when someone (an adult for that matter) passes on in Dagban, there is a day set to officially share his/her belongings to other deserved family members. This is the day they will disclose all the assets belonging to the deceased and then indicate who should take what as an inheritance. Because people used to keep their assets or valuable items which could be clothes, money, ornaments, and many more in the *kpanjɔyɔ*, it has become useful in coding a metaphorical expression in Dagbani with the *piligi* OPEN verb as its main verb in the argument structure. Note also, that in its expression as a metaphorical extension, this verb collocates with only *kpanjɔyɔ* as seen in (22a) and any other noun (being the patient) in the argument structure gives not metaphorical reading as observed in (22b) below.

22) a. *Bɛ piligi la Mikashini kpanjɔyɔ Asibiri dali*
 3PL open.PFV FOC Mikashini bag Saturday day
la.

REF

Lit: ‘They opened Mikashini’s bag on that Saturday.’

‘They shared Mikashini’s property on that Saturday.’

- b. *Bε piligi la Mikashini ηmani Asibiri dali la.
 3PL open.PFV FOC Mikashini bowl Saturday day
 REF

*Lit: 'They opened Mikashini's bowl on that Saturday.'

4.2.3 Metaphorical extensions of *vii*

The *vii* 'OPEN' verb is also very useful in coding semantic extension in Dagbani. This verb collocates with the nouns, *ashili* 'secret', *gbuni* buttocks, *tutuyu* 'bushy plants' and *gbangu* 'bush'. The *vii* OPEN verb can be expressed to metaphorically refer to the act of revealing a hidden issue. In its usage as revealing an issue, it could mean something positive or negative. However, whenever the noun, buttocks is the patient, it refers to something negative as we have in (23a). But whenever the *ashili* 'secret' it used as the patient in the event structure like (23b), it either can refer to something positive or negative, like the *kayiki* OPEN verb in (24). Again, *vii* 'open' can refer to the act of making consultation for some revealing issues through a soothsayer (23c). The same argument structure in (23c) could refer to the act of waging war against a rival as (23d) illustrates. This was done in the ancient Dagbani days by princes to test their war powers and ability to fight either in defense or to conquer additional territory for their kingdom. Another revelation on the semantic extension of the *vii* OPEN verb is its use to refer to the act of having sex with a lady. In the event structure where the verb is used to refer to the act of having sex, the *vii* OPEN verb has to co-occur with *nyo* 'burn' to form the verb phrase: *vii ka nyo* 'open and burn, which must collocate with the noun, *mɔyɔ* 'bush' as we have in (23e).

- 23) a. *Laasiche* *vii* *Azima gbuni* *zaa asiba* *ᎡᎠ.*
Laasiche open.PFV Azima buttock-PL all morning DEM

Lit: 'Laasiche has opened all Azima's buttocks this morning.'

'Laasiche has completely revealed Azima's secrets this morning.'

- b. *Amiru pa* *vii* *daabiligu* *maa daashili* *zaa wuhi*
Amiru now open.PFV business DEF secrete all show
bipola maa.

youth DEF

Lit: 'Amiru now shown all the business' secret to the youth.'

'Amiru has now revealed all the secrets of the business to the youth.'

- c. *Ka* *o* *daa giligulinyaana* *nti* *vii*
kayili
CONJ 3SG TD roam-PFV behind.house CONJ open.PFV bush
nya *din* *tahi* *li.*
see.PFV what bring.PFV 3SG

Lit: 'And he went behind the house to open the bush to see what caused it.'

'And he consulted a soothsayer to know what caused it.'

- d. *Ka o daa gili gulinyaana nti vii gban̄gu/kayili*
 CONJ 3SG TD roam behind.house CONJ open.PFV bush
ka labi na.
 CONJ return DM

Lit: ‘And he went behind the house to open the bush and returned.

‘And he/she went and waged war against some people and came back.’

- e. *Amaru bi diemdi vii ka nyo m̄ɔyɔ*
 Amaru NEG play.IPFV open.IPFV CONJ burn.IPFV bush
yeltɔya.
 matter

Lit: ‘Amaru does not play with opening and burning of bush matters.’

‘Amaru does not play with matters concerning sexual intercourse.’

4.2.4 Metaphorical extensions of *kayiki*

Another OPEN verb in Dagbani that has a metaphorical extension is the *kayiki* ‘slightly open’ verb. This verb, like the *vii* OPEN verb, can also be used to metaphorically refer to the act of revealing a hidden agenda/issue about something. Similarly, as we already observe in (23) with the *vii* OPEN verb, *kayiki* can also refer to a negative and positive event as illustrated in (24a) and (24b) respectively. A negative meaning is read into the argument structure when the patient in the structure is *gbuni* ‘buttocks’. Besides the noun, *gbuni*, one can give a positive interpretation to any sentence where *kayiki* is used

metaphorically like the structure in (24a) shows. A part from the use of *kayiki* to metaphorically refer to the act of revealing a secret, this verb is also useful in coding another semantic extension to refer to the act of ‘consulting a soothsayer’ as shown in (24c). It can also be used to refer to the act of a man having sexual intercourse with a lady (24d). Note that in its use as having sexual intercourse, the verb can only collocate with the female gender such as woman, girl or lady. This means that having the male gender (man, lad, boy) in the object position is grammatically unacceptable; hence, the illicitness in (24e).

- 24) a. *Naa maa bi sayi kayiki din beni wuhi o*
 Chief DEF NEG agee.IPRV open.PFV what there show 3SG
zuu maa hali nti kpi.
 Prince DEF till CONJ die.PFV
 Lit: ‘The chief did not agree to open what was there to the prince till he died.’
 ‘Thief did not reveal the secret to the prince till he died.’

- b. *Che ka n kayiki a bia gbuni biela*
 Let FOC 1SG open.IPFV 2SG child buttocks small
wuhi a
 Show.IPFV 2SG

Lit: ‘Let me open your child’s buttocks small and show to you.’

‘Let me reveal your child’s secrete for you small.’

c. *Che ka ti kayiki gban̄gu biela nya din beni.*

Let FOC 1PL open.IPFV bush small see.IPFV what be

Lit: ‘Let us open the bush small to see what is there.’

‘Let us at least consult a soothsayer to see what is there.’

d. *Karimbia maa yuri payisara pieto bihi*

student DEF like.IPFV ladies pant DIM

kayiki-bu pam.

open.IPFV-NOM a.lot

Lit: ‘The student likes opening ladies pants a lot.’

‘The student likes having sex with ladies a lot.’

e. **Karimbia maa yuri bidibisi pieto bihi*

student DEF like.IPFV boys pant DIM

kayiki-bu pam.

open.IPFV-NOM a.lot

*Lit: ‘The student likes opening boys’ pants a lot.’

4.2.5 Metaphorical extensions of *karigi*

Karigi is yet another OPEN verb that is used to extensively refer to ideas which are far from its basic meaning as ‘to cut open’. In its extended form, it can refer to an overmatured okro. When okro reaches a stage where it can no longer be harvested and used for cooking at its fresh state, *karigi* is the verb that is used. Usually, when any okro

reaches that stage, it eventually begins to dry up and automatically cracks if not plucked and store in an appropriate place. So, it is as a result of its subjectivity to cracks that speakers are able to use this verb in coding the term *karigi* to mean, ‘over matured’ (25a). This verb only collocates with *mana* when used to metaphorically refer to an over matured okro and hence, the illicit construction in (25b).

Secondly, this OPEN verb, *karigi* is can also be metaphorically refer to a state where someone can no longer be controlled or ruled for certain reasons. In other words, it is expressed when one behaves awkwardly towards someone who is superior to him/her. This is also coded with the same idea in (25a) as over maturity. Three of my informants observes that it is the idea from an over matured okro is what is further extended to mean a stage where someone feels he/she can no longer be ruled or controlled as we have in (25c). The metaphorical extensions of the *karigi* OPEN verb are illustrated in (25) below.

25) a. *Wunintira mana maa OR karigi-ya zaa.*

Wunintira okro DEF open-PFV all

Lit: ‘Wunintira’s okro has opened.’

‘Wunintira’s okro has over matured.’

b. **Wunintira naazuwa maa karigi-ya zaa.*

Wunintira pepper DEF open-PFV all

*Lit: ‘Wunintira’s pepper has opened.’

- c. *Laasiche pa karigi mi, so bi lahi*
 Laasiche now open.PFV FOC someone NEG again
yeri o ka o wumda.
 talk.IPF 3SG CONJ 3SG hear.IPFV

Lit: ‘Laasiche has now opened, nobody talks to her and she listens.’

Laasiche is now a wayward child, she no longer listens to anybody.’

4.2.6 Metaphorical extensions of *bɔyi*

Bɔyi is another OPEN verb that has a semantic extension. Dagbamba employ this verb to code a metaphorical expression as to ‘take an extraordinary risk’. In its use as a metaphorical extension, this verb collocates with the noun, *zuyu* ‘head’, which must also be the patient in the event structure. The illicit construction in (26b) shows that the *bɔyi* OPEN verb cannot collocate with *gbali* ‘leg’ and any noun to code a metaphorical expression in Dagbani. Also, the OPEN verb the event structure co-occurs with the verb *ɲme* ‘hit’, to form a serial verb construction (SVC) as illustrated in (26a).

- 26) a. *A yi bi ɲme m bɔyi a zuyu, a ku*
 2SG COND NEG hit.IPFV FOC open 2SG head 2SG NEG
tooi pili daabiligu.
 able start business

Lit: ‘If you do not hit open your head, you cannot start a business.’

‘If you do not take an extraordinary risk, you cannot start a business.’

- b. *A yi bi ηme m bɔyi a gbali, a ku
 2SG COND NEG hit.IPFV FOC open 2SG leg 2SG NEG
tooi pili daabiligu.
 able start business

*Lit: ‘If you do not hit open your leg, you cannot start a business.’

4.2.7 Metaphorical extensions of *yaa*

The *yaa* OPEN verb can be metaphorically referred to having a headache in Dagbani. This comes because of the fact that when one is suffering from any headache, it appears the victim’s head is going through some kind of opening process. This, according to most consultant during our interaction, is the reason why the verb, *yaa* has its extended form in Dagbani as a state of experiencing headache. This is illustrated below in (27). In its extended meaning as headache, this verb collocates with only *zuyu* ‘head’ as illustrated in (27b and 27c), any abnormal pain in any part of the body cannot be expressed as *yaa*.

- 27) a. N zuyu n yaa-ra.
 1SG head FOC open-IPFV

Lit: ‘My head is opening’

‘My head aches.’

- b. *N *puuni n yaa-ra.*
1Sg stomach FOC open.IPFV
*Lit: ‘My stomach is opening.’
INTENDED: ‘My stomach pains.’
- c. *N *sapira n yaa-ra.*
1SG ribs FOC open-IPFV
*Lit: ‘My ribs are opening.’
INTENDED: ‘My ribs pains.’

4.2.8 Metaphorical extensions of *ne*

Ne is yet another OPEN verb that has an extended meaning in Dagbani which metaphorically refers to a state of being smart, wise, or intelligent (28a). It can also refer to the state of being fluent in speech (28b). Another metaphorical extension that the *ne* OPEN verb is associated with is the state of able to control one’s legs in a crowd environment (28c) and being able to score goals in the football field (28d). It can also be used metaphorically to mean a state of having a pure heart as (28e) shows. *Neei* also collocates with the noun *nuu* ‘hand’ to metaphorically express the meaning as ‘being good at aiming a target’ as we see in (28f). In its use as a metaphorical extension in Dagbani, this verb collocates with *nina* ‘eyes, *noli* ‘mouth, *suhi* ‘soul’ and *naba* ‘legs’.

28) a. *Sibdoo zugu ne pam.*

Sibdoo head open-PFV a.lot

Lit: ‘Sibdoo head has opened a lot’.

‘Sibdoo is very smart/intelligent/smart.’

b. *Sibdoo dapala maa noli ne n yayi.*

Sibdoo child DEF mouth open.PFV FOC over

Lit: ‘Sibdoo’s child’s mouth has opened too much.’

‘Sibdoo’s child is so fluent.’

c. *Wula ka nɔ-ri zɛvari maa lala? A*

Why FOC step-IPFV vegetable.leaves DEF like.that 2SG

naba bi ne bee bɔ?

legs NEG see.IPFV or what

Lit: ‘Why are you stepping on the vegetable leaves like that? Your legs do not see or what?’

‘Why are you stepping on the vegetable leaves like that, don’t you know how to control your legs?’

- d. *Naporo naba ne pam. O bi tabigi-ri bolli*
 Naporo legs open.IPFV very. 3SG NEG kick-IPFV ball
ziŋ-da.

miss-IPFV

Lit: ‘Naporo’s legs opens a lot. He does not kick ball misses.’

‘Naporo controls his legs very well. He does not miss his target in the football field.’

- e. *Achiri ma maa suhu ne vienyela pam.*
 Achiri mother DEF heart open.IPFV well very

Lit: Achiri’s mother’s heart is opened very well.’

‘Achiri’s mother’s heart is very pure./Achiri’s mother has a very pure heart.’

- f. *Naporo nuu ne pam. Yim ka o to bua*
 Naporo hand open a.lot. once FOC 3SG shoot.PFV goat
maa

DEF

Lit ‘Naporo’s hand opens a lot. It is once he shot the goat.’

‘Naporo is very good at aiming his target. He shot the got in one attempt.’

4.3 Interim summary

In this chapter, I first provided analyses of the data presented based on the basic meaning of the identified OPENING verbs in Dagbani in section 4.1 and its sub-sections. I finally provided some metaphorical extensions of the verbs discussed in section 4.1 as they are used by native speakers in coding other semantic interpretations. In the chapter that follows, give a summary of the entire work and its findings together with some recommendations for further research.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives an outline of the numerous chapters put to achieve the objectives of this study. As indicated by the objectives on this study, it is the aim of this research to understand the various types of OPENING verbs that are available in Dagbani. This was also meant to get the basic interpretations of each verb as they occur in sentences. As part of the aims of this study, analyses of data were also supposed to focus on the semantic extensions that these verbs have, besides their basic meanings. In the following sections, a summary of the entire work will be presented in section 5.1, while findings of the research will be discussed in section, 5.2. A conclusion of this study is given in section 5.3 and then, some recommendations for further or future research on OPENING verbs in Dagbani or any other language will be made in section 5.4.

5.1 Summary of the Chapters

This thesis is made up of several different chapter, starting from chapter one to chapter five. The chapter one of this work presents the general introduction of the thesis. It consists of ten sections. the themes discussed under the various sections include the introduction of the chapter, the background of the language, Dagbani, background to the study, statement of the research problem, the purpose of the research, objectives and research questions that guides the study, the importance of the research, scope of the research and finally, how the thesis is organized.

The chapter two of this thesis gives a review of available existing works related to this study. Under this chapter, an introduction of the chapter is given, followed by a review of separation verbs, review of opening verbs and then a conclusion of the chapter.

The chapter three of this thesis paid attention to the methodological issues of the study. The various themes discussed under this chapter beyond the chapter introduction are the research approach, research design, sampling technique and sample size, sources of the data and the data collection strategies, how the data is analyzed, the study site or setting and then an interim conclusion.

The data collected for the study is presented and discussed in the fourth chapter of this thesis. Here, the discussion and analysis are centered on the objectives of the study. This is where data is discussed based on the basic semantic properties of each of the OPENING verbs collected during the fieldwork. Another major theme that attracted attention is the metaphorical extensions available for the OPENING verbs in Dagbani. The chapter also ends with an interim conclusion.

Finally, the chapter five of this thesis is where the summary of the work and its findings as well as some recommendations for further research is given.

5.2 Summary of findings

From the discussions of the data presented in this study, it is discovered that Dagbani OPEN verbs exhibit several semantic qualities. The *yooi* OPEN verb which is the prototypical OPEN verb in Dagbani is performed by executing either a cut or break

activity on the patient. Also, one can perform *yooi* by pushing or pulling a part of the object which must be the cover/door of the main object. This exercise can be assisted with an instrument or the hand and is a reversible activity as already observed by (Atintono, 2019 and Bashiru, 2021). Generally, any activity expressed with the *yooi* OPEN verb requires an agent as well as a patient in the event structure. Data presented in the study also show that the *yooi* OPEN verb has several semantic extended meanings. In its extended form, it can mean ‘to pay attention’ when the verb collocates with the noun *tiba* ‘ears’. It can also refer mean ‘to break the virginity of a lady’, ‘to commission any project’, ‘to start doing something’, and ‘to be sociable/interactive’.

Another OPEN verb discussed in the study is *piligi* ‘open’. This verb basically refers to the act of opening objects such as bowl and pots/jerrycans that have lids or covers. The act of unroofing a building is also referred to as *piligi*. Verbs under this category undergo complete and reversible process and requires both agent and patient in the event structure. In addition, this activity does not necessarily require the use of instrument except in situations where the lid or cover of the object becomes so hard to remove or turn in the case of bowls and pots/jerrycans. However, on the part of unroofing a building tools like saws, hammers, and etc. are used. *Piligi* can be used to metaphorically refer to sharing the property of a deceased and the verb must collocate with the noun, *kpanjɔɣu* ‘an indigenous container for valuable personal items’.

Vii ‘partial open’ like the other OPEN verbs results in a complete reversible separation. It refers to the act of opening an object halfway. Objects that undergo the *vii* OPEN process

are roof, textile materials and books/leaflets. This type of OPEN verb can be performed by human activity or natural activity. For instance, win can open the roof of a building, flip a book, or open the skirt or a textile material used to decorate something like a dining table. Notwithstanding, OPEN verb, *vii*, in the event structure requires an agent and patient just like the other OPEN verbs. This verb can also be extended to mean ‘to reveal a secret’, ‘to make a spiritual revelation through soothsaying’, ‘to investigate a matter’ and also, to have sex with a lady.

The fourth verb that the study looked at is the *kayiki* OPEN verb. This verb is analyzed as a partial reversible open verb which refers to the act of opening objects like eating bowls, doors, underwear, eye, windows with no instrument involved. The metaphorical extensions associated with the *kayiki* OPEN verb are no different from those of the *vii* OPEN verb. For instance, *n kayiki pieto* means ‘to have sex with a lady’, *n kayiki gbuni* means ‘to reveal someone’s bad secret’ and *n kayiki ashili* means ‘to reveal a secret’.

In addition, the *yaai* OPEN verb observed to be a complete reversible activity that refers to the act of opening one’s mouth, armpit, or legs. It also refers to the act of lifting one’s hand to hit something either with the bare hand or with any object like a hammer, cane, stone and etc. This OPEN verb also refers to a state of having a headache (*zuyu yaali*) as its metaphorical extension.

Another OPEN verb that the study discovered is the *karigi* ‘cut open’ verb. From the data presented in the analysis chapter, the verb refers to the act of opening an object by

producing a cut on the body to remove something or as a way of preparing that object for a purpose. This activity is usually done by making a careful cutting on the object. It is a complete irreversible activity carried out with sharp bladed instrument by the agent. This verb can also be used to metaphorically refer to state when an okro undergoes over maturity. Again, it refers to a child who feels he/she can no longer be controlled by others.

The *bɔyi* OPEN verb is also presented and analyzed in the study. This verb refers to the act of dividing an object into two with a sharp bladed instrument. Objects that undergo this activity are orange, mango, apple, cola nuts, etc. in the event structure of *bɔyi*, the verbs requires an agent usually using an instrument to perform the action on the patient. the *bɔyi* OPEN verb in Dagbani co-occurs with the verb, *ɲme* ‘hit’ to form an SVC to metaphorically refer to the act of ‘taking an extraordinary risk’.

Lastly, the *neei* open very is one which basically refers to only the opening of the eye but has a lot more metaphorical extended meaning that the rest of the other OPEN verbs discussed in this study. In its extended form, *neei* is intelligent, *neei* is wise, *neei* is fluent, *neei* is having the talent of scoring goals, *neei* is also having the talent to shoot, *neei* is being able to control one’s legs, and lastly, *neei* is having a good heart.

5.3 Conclusions

Some conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this studies. Generally, verbs denoting the idea of opening in Dagbani are performed without instruments. It can also

be argued that OPEN verbs mandatorily require both agent and patient. It can also be concluded that all OPEN events in Dagbani are +agent, -instrument and +patient. The *bɔyi* and *karigi* OPEN verbs do not share all these semantic features with the rest of the OPEN verbs discussed in this study. These two verbs rather show the features: +agent, +instrument and +patient. Also, another conclusion that can be made based on the findings of this study is that OPEN events are reversible with the exception of those *bɔyi* ‘split’ and *karigi* ‘cut open’ verbs. These two verbs are irreversible because for a *bɔyi* ‘split’ or *karigi* ‘cut open’ to occur, the patient has to go through a cutting process. And as reported in earlier studies (Ameka and Essegbey, 2007; Majid, et. al., 2007; Narasimhan, 2007; Bobuafor, 2018; Atintono, 2019; Bashiru, 2021) CUT events are by nature, irreversible events. It is by this that the *bɔyi* and *karigi* OPEN verbs cannot be reversed after it occurred. Metaphorical extensions are also very common across all the OPEN verbs in Dagbani. This means that aside the basic semantic meaning that OPEN verbs give, they are also very useful in coding other extended meanings which are usually proverbial in nature.

In conclusion, it is certain that as part of the aims of this thesis, the outcome of this study has a significant contribution to the study of Dagbani semantics as well as African languages in general. It is worth noting that this study is the third attempt of investigating into verb semantics of Dagbani, a Mabia language. As a result, this study will also attract the attention of linguists into the study of verb semantics of Dagbani and the Mabia languages as well. Again, as far as this research will become a useful reference material

for future studies, it can be considered a work which has contributed to the documentation and preservation of Dagbani.

5.4 Recommendations

Having outlined the findings and provided the conclusions for this study, this section is devoted to a brief outline of some recommendations for further study within the open of studies of OPEN verbs. This research is focused on the semantic properties that OPEN verbs in Dagbani exhibit. Even though the research questions in this study helped in achieving the objectives of this research much research on certain aspect of Dagbani OPEN verbs which yet to receive attention around linguistics are noticed during the study. Moreover, due to the institutional requirement on the permitted time this study should last, the objectives of the research have been limited to meet this institutional requirement. Below are some relevant aspects that future research could consider expanding the arguments about OPEN verbs in Dagbani.

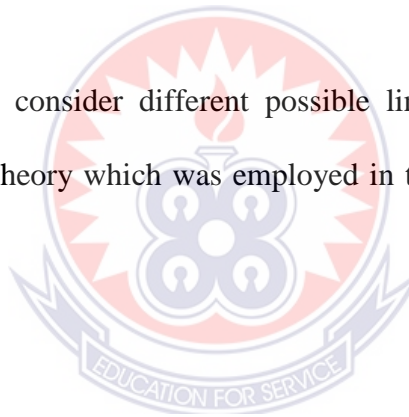
This current study paid attention to only the semantic properties of OPEN verbs in Dagbani. Therefore, other aspects such as the morphology of OPEN verbs in Dagbani could be given attention to. Also, focus could also be given to the syntax of OPEN verbs in Dagbani just as done for Gurene by Atintono (2019).

Also, a comparative study of OPEN verbs in at least, four of the Mabia languages should be considered by future studies. In fact, this could also be extended to other Kwa languages spoken in Ghana, especially those on the Northern part of Ghana where

speakers of both Mabia and these Kwa language groups share very close social values. Here, attention could be paid to the semantic extensions and/or pragmatic use of these OPEN verbs.

Moreover, data used for the analysis of the OPEN verbs in Dagbani could be expanded by considering all the dialects of Dagbani (Nayahili, Tomosili and Nanunli). Much probe could also be made in future studies to get more OPEN verbs of Dagbani since this study did not cover all the OPEN verbs in the language due to the limited time given for the research.

Finally, one could also consider different possible linguistic theories available aside Conceptual Linguistic Theory which was employed in the analysis of the data collected for this research.



REFERENCES

- Abukari, K. (2019). The syntax of Dagbani personal pronouns: an analysis *Legon Journal of Humanities* 30.2: 109-140.
- Agyepong, D. P., & Osam, E. K. (2020). The semantics and argument realization potentials of Akan verbs of separation. *Journal of West African Languages, Volume 47(1)*, PP. 30-49.
- Bashiru, N. (2021). *The semantics and metaphorical extentionns of cut and break verbs in Dagbani*. M.Phil. Thesis, University of Education, Winneba: Ghana
- Dahamani, A. (2017). *The structure and style of Dagbamba folktale*. M.Phil. thesis, University of Education, Winneba: Ghana.
- Ameke, F. K., & Essegbey, J. (2007). Cut and break verbs in Ewe and the causative alternation construction. *Cognitive Linguistics, Vol. 18(2)*, PP. 241-250.
- Ameke, F. K., & Hill, D. (2020). The comparative semantics of verbs of ‘opening’: West Africa vs Oceania. In H. Bromhead, & Z. Ye (Eds.), *Meaning, life and culture: In a conversation with Anna Wierzbicka* (pp. 33-60). Australia: The Australian National University Press.
- Atintono, S. A. (2013). *The semantics and grammar of positional verbs in Gurene: A typological perspective* . Manchester: Unpublished Ph.D Thesis: University of Manchester.
- Atintono, S. A. (2019). The semantic properties of separation verbs in Gurene. *Journal of West African Languages, volume 46(1)*, PP. 1-31.
- Bashiru, N. (2021). *The semantics of cut and break verbs in Dagbani*. Ajumako-Ghana: Unpunished M.Phil Thesis: University of Education, Winneba.
- Bohnmeyer, J., Bowerman, M., & Brown, P. (2001). Cut and break clips. In S. C. Levinson & N. J. Enfield (Eds.), *Manual for the Field Season.*, pp. 90-96.
- Bowerman, M. (2005). Why can't you "open" a nut or "break" a cooked noodle? Learning covert object categories in action word meanings . In L. Gershkoff-Stowe, & D. H. Rakison, *Building object categories in developmental time* (pp. 210-245). London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associat Publishers .
- Bowerman, M., & Choi, S. (2001). Shaping meanings for language: universal and language specific in the acquisition of spatial semantic categories. In M. Bowerman, & S. C. Levinson, *Language acquisition and conceptual development* (pp. 475-512). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Guerssel, M., Halle, K., Laughren, M., Levin, B., & Eagle, J. W. (1985). A cross-linguistic study of transitivity alternation. In Eilfort, William H, Paul D. Kroeber, and Karen L. Peterson (eds.). *Papers from the parasession on causatives and agentivity at the 21st regional meeting* (pp. 48-63.). Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.
- Hale, K., & Keyser, S. (1987). *A view from the middle*. . MA: Center for Cognitive Science, MIT Press.
- Hudu, Fusheini. (2012). Dagbani focus particles, a descriptive study. *Journal of West African Languages*. 39:1. 97-129.
- Hudu, F. (2010). Dagbane Tongue-root Harmony. A Formal Account with Ultrasound Investigation. PhD Dissertation, University of British Columbia.
- Hudu, F. (2005). Number Marking in Dagbani. MSc Thesis. University of Alberta, Canada.
- Iddrisu, A. (2020) *Phonological and morphological adaptation of loanwords in Dagbani*. M.Phil. thesis, University of Education, Winneba: Ghana.
- Issah, A. S., & Acheampong, O. S. (2021). Interrogative pronouns in Dagbani and Likpakpaanl. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics*, 10(2), 30-57. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/gjl.v10i2.2..>
- Inusah & Mahama (2019) Marking exhaustivity in Dagbani. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics* 8.1: 23-41.
- Inusah, A. & Issahaku, S. J. (2019). The role of oral proverbs in Dagbani. *International Journal of Language, Literature and Culture*. 6.1: 1-10.
- Issah A. S. & Smith, W. P. (2020). Subject and non-subject *ex-situ* focus in Dagbani. *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics* 5(1): 4. 1-36. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.664>. Special Collection on Subject Extraction, guest editor: Michael Y. Erlewine.
- Issah, A. S. (2020). *On the structure of A-bar Constructions in Dagbani: Perspectives of wh-Questions and Fragment Answers*. Berlin: Peter Lang.
- Issah, A. S. (2015b). Conjoint and disjoint verb alternations in Dagbani. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics (GJoL)* Vol: 4(2) pp: 29-63. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4314/gjl.v4i2>.

- Issah, A. S. (2015a). An Analysis of Interrogative Constructions in Dagbani. *Journal of West African Languages (JWAL)*. Vol: 42(1): pp: 46-63.
- Issah, A. S. (2013c). The function of the postverbal *la* in Dagbani. *Studies in African Linguistics (SAL)*. Vol: 42(2): pp: 153-174.
- Issah, A. S. (2013b). The structure of the Dagbani simple noun Phrase. *South African Journal of African Languages (SAJAL)*. Vol: 33(2): pp: 203-212.
- Issah, A. S. (2013a). Focus and constituent question formation in Dagbani. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics (GJoL)*. Vol: 2(1): pp: 39-62.
- Issah, A. S. (2012). Phrasal Identificational and contrastive focus in Dagbani. *Journal of West African Languages (JWAL)* 39(1): pp: 75-96.
- Issahaku, M. S. (2021). *The syntax and semantics of Dagbani adverbials*. M.Phil. thesis, University of Education, Winneba: Ghana.
- Issahaku, S. (2018). *The Dagbamba witchcraft and the concept of exorcism*. M.Phil. thesis, University of Education, Winneba: Ghana.
- Mahama. I. (2004). *Dagbani-English dictionary*. Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT).
- Jackendooff, R. (1990). *Semantic structure*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Mahama. I. (2016). *English-Dagbani dictionary*. Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT).
- Majid, A., Bowerman, M., Van Staden, M., & Boster, J. S. (2007). The semantic categories of cutting and breaking events: A crosslinguistic perspective. *Cognitive Linguistics, Vol. 18*(2), pp. 133-152.
- Musah, A. (2021) *A syntactic analysis of Dagbani proverbial personal names*. M.Phil. thesis, University of Education, Winneba: Ghana.
- Plockey, F. D. & Abdulai, S. A. (2018). Living libraries: The role of the *baansi* in preserving the culture of the Dagbon in Northern Ghana. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 11.2: 154-167.
- Plockey, F. D. & Ahamed, B. A. (2016). "Decolonizing our library system: The living librarians (Baansi) of Dagbon, Northern Ghana" (2016). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 1366. <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/1366>
- Rashid, M. A. (2019). The Dagbamba Damba repertoire *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*. 6.1: 97-107.

- Salifu, A. (2021). *The Semantics and metaphorical extensions of di 'eat' and nyu 'drink' verbs in Dagbani*. M.Phil. thesis, University of Education, Winneba: Ghana.
- Salifu, A., and M-minibo, I, J. G (2014). The Bellowing Bull Shall Seek Each Other out: Dagbañ Praise Names as epithets, narrative and history, global journal of interdisciplinary social science. 3(3), 162-166.
- Shaibu, N. (2021). *The morphology and sociolinguistic study of some Dagbamba town praise names*. M.Phil. thesis, University of Education, Winneba: Ghana.
- Narasimhan, B. (2007). Cutting, breaking, and tearing verbs in Hindi and Tamil. *Cognitive Linguistics*, Vol. 18(2), PP. 195–205.
- Olawsky, K. (1999). Aspects of Dagbani Grammar with Special Emphasis on Phonology and Morphology. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. Munich: Lincom.
- Olawsky, J. Knut. 1997. *Interaction of tone and morphology in Dagbane*. DGfS-Tagung in Düsseldorf. Retrieved on 30/01/2020 from: <https://user.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/~olawsky/hp-dgfs.htm>.
- Olawsky, K. (2004). What Is a Noun? What Is an Adjective? Problem of Classification in Dagbani. *Journal of African Languages & Linguistics* 25, 127-148.
- Schaefer, R. P., & Egbokhare, F. O. (2012). Emai separation verbs and telicity. In M. R. Marlo (Ed.), *42nd Annual Conference on African Linguistics* (pp. 257-265). Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Wilson, W. A. A. (1972). *Dagbani: An introductory course, part ii*. MS, Tamale: Institute of Linguistics